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# Report of the Task Force on the Special Educational Needs of Women

University of Maine Office of the President

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REPORT OF  
THE TASK FORCE  
ON THE  
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS  
OF WOMEN

Office of the President  
University of Maine  
Orono, Maine

April 17, 1973

On January 17, 1972 an ad hoc committee was appointed to evaluate the special educational needs of women within the University of Maine at Orono/Bangor and in the larger community served by this University. This committee, chaired by Dr. Constance Carlson, consisted of the following members:

Dr. Elizabeth Barden  
Mrs. Kay Barrett  
Dr. Constance Carlson  
Mrs. Mary Lou Cormier  
Mrs. Catherine Cutler  
Ms. Kristine Dahlberg  
Dr. Mary Dietrich  
Mrs. Barbara Eames  
Dr. Paulette French  
Mr. Sherman Hasbrouck  
Mrs. Elizabeth Libby  
Dr. Jane Pease  
Miss Patricia Riley  
Dr. Edward Thompson  
Dr. Stephen Weber  
Mrs. Alice Wellman

In late March 1973 the committee made formal recommendations to me. The report is significant and deserves wide distribution to the entire UMOB staff. Reactions to the report may be addressed to Dr. Carlson or to me. In view of the recommendations contained in this report and my departure from the scene as of June 30, 1973, a continuing committee will be appointed to help implement the recommendations within institutional resources and in cooperation with UMOB administration.

Winthrop C. Libby  
President

WCL:jc

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF WOMEN

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: THE PROBLEM AND POSSIBLE SOLUTION RECOMMENDED BY PRESIDENT LIBBY'S TASK FORCE ON THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF WOMEN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT ORONO/BANGOR.

THE PROBLEM: The intellectual, social and professional climate of the University does not encourage women students (undergraduate, graduate, CED, and special) to realize their full intellectual, social and professional potential.

THE SOLUTION: The University environment must become a vital catalyst encouraging each woman student to make the most of the educational opportunity and cultural freedom available at Orono/Bangor thereby achieving her unique potential and developing a self-vision of herself as a responsible human being both in personal and in public life.

### A. Short-range Means

1. The appointment of a woman administrator to serve: (a) as a coordinator of women's studies; (b) as a consultant to administrators, faculty, and students on courses, programs, and research pertinent to women's studies; (c) as the person responsible for collating and disseminating to the appropriate members and units of the University the developments and research on the social, intellectual, and cultural growth of women in progress at other institutions.
2. A course for freshmen that considers the roles and unique qualities of women through the perspective of variant disciplines.
3. The immediate addition of women in key administrative positions in the following divisions presently all male: the Admissions staff, the Continuing Education Divisions, and the Placement staffs at the Orono/Bangor campuses and women of administrative rank as counselors at the Bangor campus.
4. The appointment as vacancies occur of more than a "token" woman to the committees involved in University policy decisions.



5. A significant proportion of women must be included in the persons brought to the campus for lectures, workshops, seminars, and other events that implicitly recognize intellectual and/or cultural capability and achievement. Initial emphasis should be placed on those fields of learning, such as business, science, and engineering, which have few women majors and fewer women faculty of senior rank.

#### B. Long-range Means

1. The evolution of courses in women's studies in various disciplines.
2. The establishment of women's centers at the Orono and Bangor campuses.

### DISCUSSION

The Problem: The intellectual, social and professional climate of the University discourages women students (undergraduate, graduate, CED, and special) from realizing their full intellectual, social and professional potential.

Our intention is not to point out past failings, but to urge innovations which will enable all students to realize a more meaningful University experience. These findings also assess the present status of women and suggest corrective steps that would update the University and place it in the mainstream of current educational treatment of women students.

The existence of the problem has been acknowledged by the University community for the past 18 months. Because it surfaced initially in an examination of the treatment of women employees brought about by federal law, it wrongly appeared to many male administrators as a threat rather than an opportunity. The rights of women employees thus are mentioned in this report both as an historical footnote and as a possible explanation for the defensive posturing which has made it difficult for women students and faculty (there were no women administrators, except in areas dealing exclusively with women) to communicate through logic with many male peers and with most males superior in rank.

The positive aspect of the manner in which the problem was forced upon the University community was that the University was prompted to reexamine its practices and attitudes. In the process it caused administration,

faculty, and students to think positively once the initial emotional outpouring proved self-exhausting as well as fruitless. Therefore, instead of dwelling on past inequities, which will be mentioned only to supply necessary background, this report elaborates on the steps that must be taken to make the University an institution of equal opportunity for all its students.

The solution: The University must become a vital catalyst to provide each woman student with the educational opportunity and cultural freedom to achieve her unique potential and to develop a self-vision giving her confidence in herself as a responsible human being both in personal and in public life.

The steps essential to resolve the present dilemma of the woman student have been divided into six short-range means and two long-range means. The distinction between the two divisions is defined by practicality, not by priority of importance. Obviously the long-range means of courses in women's studies will vary in the time required to establish them according to the resources in womanpower and the awareness of the need for them within the various departments.

The long-range means of the establishment of women's centers on the Bangor and Orono campuses will require funds, allocated and/or raised, and hence those concerned will first have to participate in the annual University wide competition for a top priority on the budget. Although the centers are crucial to the resolution of the special needs of women on the Orono and Bangor campuses, to delay the recruitment of capable and sensitized women until such centers are available could prolong the deprivation of women students for an unconscionable time. It is also self-evident that the effective implementation of the short-range means depend not only on the sensitivity of each University professional but also upon his/her realizing these needs are part of their professional obligation to the whole University community. Only then can the short-range means facilitate the establishment of the women's centers.

#### A. SHORT-RANGE MEANS

1. The appointment of a woman administrator to serve:  
(a) as a coordinator of women's studies; (b) as a consultant to administrator, faculty and students on courses, programs, and research pertinent to women's studies; (c) as the person responsible for collating and disseminating to the appropriate members and units of the University the developments and research on the social, intellectual and cultural growth of women in progress at other institutions.

The appointment of a woman administrator to coordinate women's studies at both the Orono and Bangor campuses would follow the now nationally established pattern of formal recognition of women's studies as a necessary and legitimate discipline. (A bibliography published in October 1971 listed 610 women's courses in progress at that time.) Using many diverse subjects, women's studies deals with various perspectives and attitudes, cultural and intellectual, toward women. A more specific description is included in the discussion of B.1--The evolution of courses in women's studies in various disciplines.

The woman administrator would identify the particular needs of all women and bring together the established academic areas, the personnel services, and students in planning courses to meet those needs. For example, on the Orono campus there have been two primarily undergraduate interdisciplinary courses with a large enrollment of students from all the classes. Graduate women and men students are serving as leaders in the current third offering. Women professionals, faculty and counselors have voluntarily done, on an overload basis, the detail work as well as the basic teaching of these courses. Like slender spires of a giant iceberg these courses signify independent attempts of concerned faculty and women students to break through the myopic surface of traditional concepts by creating positive channels for the emerging intellectual quest of rapidly increasing numbers of women students. The dramatic success of these courses demonstrates that women students do not find total intellectual fulfillment within the University structure. In other isolated efforts, individual students, faculty and employees are organizing meetings and symposiums. Without administrative support, for the committed, the majority will not break through their apathy to extend their self-awareness. Non-support denies the problem and makes the committed eccentrics instead of innovators.

Women in the greater Bangor community are asking for similar courses offered during the daytime, during hours that would not upset family schedules. These women would like to explore together the new insights and knowledge evolving out of the current research highly relevant to their roles in society. One such course offered during the current spring semester under the auspices of



the Continuing Education Division is entitled "The Role of Women: Is Physiology Destiny?" This course has attracted more than 50 women from an unexpectedly wide geographical range including Lincoln and Ellsworth. Taught by women faculty and women graduate students, this is an interdisciplinary course which weaves together the insights of the condition of women as explored through anthropology, literature, history, communications, and psychology. Symptomatic of the needs for a concentrated effort to raise the self-esteem of women is the cultural homogeneity of the women attracted to this experimental course. For the most part, they have had some college training. In order for the University to reach women unfamiliar with University procedures and possibly shy about enrolling in a college-sponsored course, the coordinator might initially wish to take courses into the communities thus eliminating the tradition-bound concept that women should go to school only between the ages of 18 and 22.

The coordinator would necessarily be available to women of all ages in a wide variety of personal and professional situations in order to correlate resources to meet their needs through viable academic structures: lectures, seminars, conferences. So urgent are these needs at present that a number of women's groups in Maine are independently sponsoring meetings and study groups. Like other groups of citizens, for example, those working in environment, government, recreation and industry, they should be able to look to their University as a primary interdisciplinary resource.

A major responsibility of the woman administrator would be to confer with persons in similar positions in other universities and other regions of the country. The significant research now taking place throughout the country must be introduced continuously into the courses, programs and departments on the Orono and Bangor campuses. For example, the Radcliffe Institute Conference on Women, Spring 1972, brought together leading women in every field, but by the time the University found out about it, the conference was filled. The papers delivered at that conference have now been published and have been ordered by the Fogler Library, but the personal interchange that often produces the most pertinent ideas cannot be

duplicated. Dr. Paulette French of the Task Force attended an EPDA Institute, "A Challenge: Women in Higher Education," held in June 1972 at the University of Florida which has enabled her to provide fresh insights to her colleagues and students.

Illustrations of the attempt to meet adult women's needs now underway at other campuses are fair, flexible admissions standards offered with credit for demonstrable knowledge without dilution of academic requirements. Just as conventional tests have proven unfair discriminators when taken by minority applicants, a graduate record examination or a standard achievement test's quantitative index does serious injustice to the innate ability of the women whose goals have changed since their high school mathematics classes. By the same logic, a student who has established her ability to express herself in written or spoken language should not be forced by academic fiat designed for the traditional student to fulfill hidebound requirements. A woman legislator who wishes a degree in political science, for example, should be able to submit her practical experience for credit. A faculty committee could be set up to assist the Admissions staff in academic screening and placement.

2. A course for freshmen that considers the roles and unique qualities of women through the perspective of variant disciplines.

The Task Force unanimously agreed that freshmen women and men must have the opportunity, organized and extending over a period of time, to understand their options for self-identity before the campus environment shapes them into its congenital patterns. Significantly, the members of the Task Force studying or teaching on campus were those most insistent on the urgency of the course.

The factors making the course imperative early in the students' careers follow: (a) many freshmen come from relatively sheltered backgrounds making them vulnerable to sophisms, especially those cloaked in cultural cliches; (b) strong, often contradictory pressures, such as traditional mores, peer influences that challenge homespun

values, courses and extra-curricular activities considering topics hitherto taboo to many freshmen for open discussion cause confusion and sometimes anxiety; (c) the competitive aspects of achieving a respectable rating on the peer approval scale compound the freshmen's dilemma when they are unsure of the scale's components. Thus the concept of women as possessing separate, self-determined identities presents complex problems, particularly for undergraduate women of the traditional 18 to 22 years old group who had expected to follow instilled, programmed social and intellectual learning patterns.

One of the men on the Task Force emphasizes the need for a course in women's studies that would reach all students, men and women.

"I believe that the root cause of many difficulties experienced by women, both within and without this institution, lies in a low sense of self-esteem. This low self-esteem manifests itself in many ways. Because women students have a traditionally lower level of professional aspiration, most do not excel; because they have little hope of employing their expertise professionally, many are disinterested in their courses; because they have been taught that, as in dancing, 'the man always leads,' the majority defer to male students, and rarely take a leadership role in class discussion. These are only the most obvious manifestations of a pervasive problem that incapacitates or cripples the intellectual achievement of almost half of our students."

In discussing ways of countering the University atmosphere that denies women self-esteem, he points out that the separate courses for women are taken by those already cognizant of their problems. The typical students, both men and women, are the ones that must be reached.

"I believe that we must undertake a more ambitious approach if we are to have a real effect upon this problem....I suggest that we inaugurate a course in women's studies....in principle it should deal



in general with the present and past condition of women in our civilization and then address itself, specifically, to the problems that confront women as women in our society. This course must have a wide appeal to students who are not already sensitive to the need for women's studies...

"Furthermore, I believe that it is important that this course be open to men as well as women...it should be clear that men are as much a part of the problem as are women."

The content of the course, it was agreed, would have to be organized by the woman coordinator. The Task Force believes that the benefits from such a course make it a practical necessity to ensure equal educational opportunity for the majority of the women students.

3. The addition of women to key administrative positions on the Admissions staff and the Continuing Education Division staff at the Orono campus and women of administrative rank to the Admissions and Counseling staff at the Bangor Campus.

The introduction of the prospective student to the University if he/she is planning to enter a conventional four-year program is through the Admissions Office. The presence of women on the Admissions staffs of both campuses would contribute to the educational opportunity and the cultural freedom of the woman student in the following ways: (a) demonstrate at the very outset when the prospective male/female student is particularly sensitized and open to impression that the University believes in the intellectual capacity of women by placing them in positions where important evaluative judgments are made; (b) have available for the shy or culturally inhibited, prospective woman student well-informed women with whom the student can speak frankly without the customary adolescent female fears of appearing stupid or aggressive in the presence of a male authority figure; (c) provide the mature woman student entering a full program with empathic women who can help her evaluate the viability of her entrance and present her with the available options.

The adult women embarking on a new program in the Continuing Education Division constitute the most isolated and most easily discouraged group of students looking to the University for the fulfillment of educational and cultural needs, according to interviews with a significant number who have enrolled or who wish to enroll in such courses. The appointment of women of administrative rank in this division could help these women in the following ways: (a) supply role models of women who have obtained an education and are using it positively; (b) provide peers to alleviate through counseling the student's self-doubts (she has often been forced by unexpected circumstance to seek more education in order to maintain her and/or family's standard of living); (c) plan a realistic program to achieve as nearly as possible the student's goal; (d) arrange social meetings that would enable mature women to exchange mutually supportive ideas and information; (e) keep up with and disseminate to eligible students information about local, regional and national support funds, scholarships, and fellowships--opportunities rapidly burgeoning for women in other states.

The University of Maine at Bangor has an open admissions policy for the students in its General Studies program. The women entering this area are, in accordance with the community college pattern, a very diverse group in age and background. These students often have a tradition of educational failure to overcome. Women of administrative rank on the Admissions and Counseling staff could provide the extra support these women need in the following ways: (a) help them to assess their capabilities through sympathetic interviews and tests different from those based on traditional norms; (b) provide continuing supportive counseling to help them adjust to the restructuring of traditional cultural concepts; (c) assist them to find constructive outlets for their expanded self-awareness.

4. The appointment as vacancies occur of more than a token woman to the committees involved in University policy decisions.

The appointment of more than a token woman to the committees involved in University policy decisions must be implemented as quickly as possible, because

students often respect the administration's value system as a model. If the University displays little confidence in the women on its staff by not involving them in University policy decisions, the students, both men and women, adopt the same unwritten principle--that women professionals are not the equal of their male colleagues in judgment, in intellect, and in compassion. This reinforcement of the inferior status of women strengthens the crippling self-image of the woman student and endorses the superior ego-concept of the man student, also a damaging self-image.

The loss of the particular insights that women could have contributed to the University can never be calculated, because until the past year they have not had access to the decision-making process except in fields of study pertaining exclusively to women students. The contributions of contemporary women to the quality of American life indicate that much has been lost on this campus. Certainly the past disenfranchisement of the woman student has had measurable tragic results. For example, no woman had been a member of the medical school advisory committee and several women students report that they have been consistently discouraged from applying to medical school. It is interesting to note that one 1972 woman graduate was accepted by several medical schools. Fortunately one woman was added to the committee this year.

Initially the committees for the 1972-73 academic year, particularly the committees that have the greatest influence over the policies of the University, showed nearly a total omission of women. However, this year several women have been added granting women about 10 percent of the committee memberships. The Orono committees on which no woman now has membership are the following: the Committees of the Administration: Academic Standing, Advisory, Capital Construction Review Board, Eligibility, Planning, Patent, Safety and Civil Defense, Scheduling, Student Wages, Traffic, Two-year Programs, University Space and University Stores.

In every instance, women students are vitally affected by committee decisions as are the men students. Similarly the committees of the Council

of Colleges, also essential to the government of the University, do not have women from the following committees: the Academic Affairs Committee, the Library Committee, the Research Funds Committee, the Television Instruction Committee, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee and the Faculty Professional Relations Review Board.

On the Bangor campus, the situation is equitable with women represented on all major committees and chairpersons of several.

On the Faculty Liaison Council, the advisory group from all the campuses to the Chancellor has twelve members representing the Orono campus. One is a woman. One of the two members representing the Bangor campus is a woman. No woman has membership on the Salary Study Committee.

Five of the 34 faculty members of the Council of Colleges are women. On the Graduate School Committees for the Graduate Board, there is no woman representing the biological sciences, no woman representing the physical sciences in mathematics, one woman representing the humanities, and no woman representing the social sciences. Therefore, out of a Graduate Board membership of 23, there is one woman. Again on the Graduate School Curriculum Committee there is only one woman member.

The total enrollment for 1971-72 on the Orono/Bangor campuses showed 6,762 men, 4,637 women. Until the active recruitment of women faculty required by the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity increases measurably the available pool of women for committee work, women will have a minimal participation in the decision making process of the University.

Similarly as prospective students open the 1973 University catalogue and look at the listings of the offices of administration, they note that no woman is listed among the members of the administration at the Orono campus. One woman is listed in the officers of divisions and that position is Director of the School of Human Development, which has nearly a 100 percent enrollment of women. As students continue through the catalogue, they find only one department officer, again in the field of Human Development, and also find that in the list of persons to whom inquiries should be



directed for both the Orono and Bangor campuses, no woman is listed except for Women's Housing. Clearly a prospective student could assume that the University does not display confidence in its woman power.

5. The inclusion of a significant proportion of women in the persons brought to the campus for lectures, workshops, seminars, and other events that implicitly recognize intellectual and/or cultural capability and achievement with initial emphasis on those fields of learning, such as business, science and engineering, which have not been successful in the recruitment of women students or staff.

The random survey of students' definitions of their interest and roles taken by the Student Activities and Organizations programmer in the fall 1972 semester showed a curious fallacy in student thinking: sex placed first on the interest scale, yet womens' programs rated near the bottom. The dichotomy in the student mind reveals that the sexual act defines the person. Therefore, although student opinion judges male and female according to a peer sexual rating, there is little realization of a potentially enriching awareness of sexual differences. A static approach to sex definition has become so passively accepted that the need for women's studies is precisely in inverse ratio to the awareness of that need.

Although a women's symposium was necessary to direct attention to women as achievers instead of as players of conventional roles, the goal of such a symposium is to generate a realization that women are making significant intellectual contributions in all disciplines. Therefore they should naturally be included in all future lecture series, cultural events, and symposiums.

A student becomes conscious of her potential for development if the University utilizes the talents of women. An institution's attitudes are quickly communicated to the student, because they are decreed the holders of power whom they respect. One of the best methods to build the self-confidence of women students to use the full resources of the University is to bring to the campus women who have demonstrated success, particularly in areas where women historically have been discouraged.

Bringing young women now actively engaged in rising professionally and highly respected mature women, for example Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm featured speaker at the symposium, Women: Changing Images, held at Orono this winter, is essential to reinforce the egos of both undergraduate and graduate, young, middle-aged, and older women. All should have role models with whom they can talk and with whom they can identify in order to build up the self-confidence which too many facets of the University at the present time are designed to discourage. Successful women in proportionate numbers therefore should be made available not only for lectures but also to appear in classes in order to meet informally with students, both men and women, so that students can understand and communicate with the women to find out ways in which they can overcome traditional obstacles.

The symposium cracked the wall of indifference as evidenced by the numbers of women and men attending the various events. The problems have been placed in dramatic relief. Only continuing follow-up will produce change instead of self-satisfied retrospection.

6. The addition of women to key administrative positions on the placement staff at the Orono campus and the establishment of a placement staff at the Bangor campus.

There is not a woman of administrative rank on the placement staff for any career except teaching. This appointment suggests that teaching is the obvious career for the educated woman. The concept is reinforced by the strongly male-oriented point of view of the Placement Office staff. As a case in point, in March 1972, a woman was refused career counseling on the grounds that it would be useless to help her until her husband had found employment although she, a graduate of the University and also a member of the faculty, stated to the interviewer that she and her husband, a student, had agreed that they would go wherever the best offer was made to either one of them.

With Equal Employment Opportunity Act a federal fact, many doors previously closed to women students are now open. However, uninformed students cannot walk through them. Students without confidence will never dare to walk through them.



Therefore in addition to building her self-esteem, the woman student must have equal support in career planning and placement. The case cited above obviously could be psychologically destructive, to all but the most determined.

## B. LONG-RANGE MEANS

### 1. The evolution of courses in women's studies in various disciplines.

Women's studies are appearing in many different guises. At some institutions they are a separate study area. At other colleges and universities they are being integrated into the curriculum. Because of the historically low profile of women at this University, women's studies probably should not be developed as an instant and separate solution.

The freshmen course previously outlined provides an opportunity for the incoming students to look at their ideas from a new, stimulating perspective. In the same way women's studies provide an opportunity for the faculty to reexamine the content of their courses for a new, stimulating perspective. A survey of syllabi shows that courses traditionally teach the past as a record of man's, not woman's, achievement. Male authors, scientists, and historical figures dominate the pattern of the classes. Several departments have already instituted special courses concentrating on the achievements of women and have found a plethora of material.

However, if women's contributions to knowledge are always treated as separate and are isolated as such in the departments, the conclusion becomes inevitable that women who have been noteworthy should be treated as different. The long-range implication is unmistakable that they are atypical of what womankind can do. Courses concentrating on women as achievers, then, instead of on the discipline's academic goals should be an intermediary step leading to the raised awareness of the faculty to the necessity of including women and their achievements naturally in the presentation of their material. Thus women and men who would not be attracted to women's studies would share in the knowledge of women's capabilities. On a purely academic level, the unconscious denigration of woman which has distorted her intellectual and artistic contributions would be changed to a realistic presentation.

2. The establishment of Human Resource Centers at the Orono/Bangor campuses.

Just as women's studies should be integrated into traditional courses, so too a women's center must be a part of both the campus and the community, not a separate, unrelated entity. Such a center should encourage the full development of human potential by providing legitimate, pragmatic services allowing women to follow paths previously closed to them. Historically the University has copied society in intellectualizing the problems of minorities and women instead of providing leadership in creating viable solutions and alternatives for them. A Human Resource Center would provide a means to coordinate the knowledge and resources of academia and the community in order to initiate positive action to meet these needs. The centers at each campus must fulfil the following functions:

1. The Human Resource Center should provide services to women of all ages, both in and out of the University. Many women in the community wish tentative engagement with the University as a non-embarrassing, intermediate step before they have the confidence for involvement. For University women the center could provide personal, academic and career counseling, information concerning graduate schools and available financial aid, and could function as a meeting area and clearing house where information and assistance would be available for individual questions and problems, such as the explanation of CLEP and other testing methods, advising, the arranging of schedules, and the planning of tutorial programs. Likewise the Human Resource Center could offer information, training programs, and non-credit courses to community women who do not wish to return to the University on a formal basis or who are anxious to obtain jobs immediately. In cooperation with the Continuing Education Division and the Cooperative Extension Services, programs could be established dealing with pragmatic areas, such as home management, accounting, health, nutrition, child development, and developmental courses in work skills long dormant but necessary to return to work.

Coordination with and publicity about programs and services offered by local women's groups would also be a valuable service for the Human Resource Center to initiate.

Evidence is abundantly clear that women in order to step out of their accustomed roles must have not only continuing support but also information collated for them, because they have not been trained in seeking information for themselves and cannot make alone a smooth transition into complicated, data-filled world.

2. The Human Resource Center must sponsor and coordinate research. The open-university concept, credit for work experience, flexibility in degree requirements to allow for concentrated study in a particular area or for specialization in immediate career needs are a few of the many approaches now being tried to facilitate the education of mature people looking for feasible programs without frills. The coordinator must have a solid academic background enabling her to interpret and disseminate the current research and to suggest innovative and useful programs suitable to the citizens of Maine.
3. The Human Resource Center must supply consultative services for the compilation of the materials necessary to include women's achievements and perspectives in on-going courses and extra-curricular academic events as well as to provide assistance in the development of women's courses as they may be needed.
4. The Human Resource Center must work with the administration and the community in public service by organizing day care and out reach programs which would enable women with limited educational backgrounds to prepare for careers commensurate with their ability. Personal experiences have been documented showing that an older woman who takes the initiative to return to school is often discouraged by the University's lack of policy on how she should be admitted and how to schedule a program which accommodates her family commitments. She is forced to seek out department

after department, advisor after advisor until her needs are met. Many drop out along the way. Counselling, according to all the research available on women today, on a one-to-one basis must be included to establish self-confidence in both the returnee and the hesitant adventurer into higher education.

The services of the Human Resource Center are limitless. While it should concentrate primarily on the woman, at present, and offer services and programs to raise her to a level of equality and to awaken her potential to achieve, this center cannot fulfil this mission without its common usage by women and men.

#

April 1973



APPENDIX TO REPORT

STATEMENT FROM MRS. MARY LOU CORMIER OF THE UMB  
FACULTY IN THE FORM OF A LETTER ADDRESSED TO  
CHAIRPERSON CARLSON

Dear Connie:

After affording much serious consideration to committee transactions and the summary of findings, I would consider myself seriously negligent if I did not relate to you my thoughts and reservations.

A systematic approach to problem solving involves first: the identification of the problem with substantiated evidence; second, the exploration of alleviating alternatives; third, the decision of an alternative with supporting reasons; and fourth, a re-evaluation of the decision.

It is my personal feeling that we have been somewhat superficial attending to this process and the ramifications involved could be costly. The identified problem, in my opinion, is too generalized, lacks objectivity and solid supportive evidence. Some examples cited during committee were equally applicable to male or female students. Those that appeared to indicate inequities did not warrant broad generalizations.

Perhaps the alternatives explored and chosen are even more indicative of nearsightedness on our part. It appears that the repeated emphasis of women studies throughout the document reinforces this as a special educational need of women and I strongly question its validity. I am opposed to the fundamental concepts behind this approach, as assurance for equal opportunities for women. It connotes to me a possibility of an indoctrination of females who may be happy, well adjusted individuals content to function in a different, maybe even superior, role.

If conscience raising is necessary, and I feel the male component on the Bangor campus is already well aware and this we could weaken, it seems more logical and ultimately more effective in the long run, that we place our efforts to insure equality, in conjunction with, not segregated from, the male population. The more we function apart the more males will feel threatened and consequently will be less supportive. Many feel that this decisive approach has not been effective solving problems of a similar nature.

If concrete, substantiated problems do exist that indicate inequality we have an opportunity to offer specific recommendations. If we are concerned about future inequalities, I agree we should have an effective channel to investigate and if necessary recommend solutions.

However, we should consider the equal rights of the opposing view who are justifiably concerned about the future of the family structure, etc. I believe that we should assist every student to fulfill their potential and maybe there should be a mechanism of recourse for any student (male or female) concerned about discriminatory practices.

It seems so logical to me that our approach should be to act as if we indeed are equal within the context of a career world, and we should strive to eliminate overt and subtle contradictory practices by functioning with people, not sexes. When we address ourselves to traditional University policy, let us recognize that we are speaking of potential fulfillment of all students not discriminatory educational opportunities.

In addition, we should be duly concerned for the taxpayers and the future effectiveness of the University. I could not justify the dollar sign affixed to all of the recommendations. I would also like assurance that the most effective, best prepared individual is the one hired to fill any position within the University; if not, we are taking "two giant steps backward" in our quest for genuine acceptance and mutual respect. We may indeed find women appointed to administrative positions and policy making committees who are less effective because attitudinal change did not occur prior to appointment. Consequently, we become recipients of 'lip service' with little or no subsequent action.

The recommendations within this document advocating cohesiveness of all people are commendable, justifiable and worthy of support. These include the recommendations of appointing qualified women within the areas of high level administrative positions, admissions, counseling, continuing education and placement services, as vacancies occur. If this is followed through appropriately awareness will result and equality will prevail in due time founded on solid principles.

We should be positive in our approach, recognizing what has been accomplished and the possible resources available. To my knowledge the University has taken some positive steps recognizing the capabilities of women and has in some instances responded to women's educational needs. For women to be developed to fulfill high level responsible positions, we should utilize individuals who are responsive to human equality to do this; otherwise, the attainment of proposed goals will be prolonged, threatening and less effective.



Appendix to Report .... 3

To recapitulate, I concur that women should have an equal educational opportunity and we should offer recommendations to ensure this in the present and future. For reasons previously stated I am not in agreement with women studies and women centers which foster further segregation, as the appropriate method for alleviating the problems. I do agree with integrating women within the system to accomplish these goals.

If you would like to discuss this in further detail I will be happy to respond. The necessity of an additional meeting would seem almost fruitless, since the diverse opinions really stem from adverse philosophical beliefs and could be disputed indefinitely.

Sincerely,

s/Mary Lou Cormier, R.N.  
Instructor

March 26, 1973